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THE CURRENT ZINC SITUATION
IN THE USSR

The USSR is estimated to have produced 293,000 tons* of zinc metal in 1957 (Table 1). This output was about 264% of 1950 production and represented about 56% of the total Sino-Soviet Bloc output and approximately 10% of the world total (Tables 1 and 2). The Sixth Five Year Plan (1956-60) called for an increase of zinc production of 177% of the 1955 level or to 393,000 tons. It is believed that the Soviet Union will attain this production level. Revised goals under the new Seven Year Plan (1959-1965) have not yet been announced, but there is no reason to doubt that increases in nonferrous metal production, including zinc, will continue to be stressed as they have been since the end of World War II.

Soviet zinc reserves are probably adequate to support domestic industrial expansion for an indefinite period. According to the Soviet Minister of Geology, the USSR has the largest reserves of zinc in the world. Some support for this statement may be derived from the announcements made from time to time regarding the discovery of new zinc deposits in the USSR. Unfortunately, however, details on the ore content and geology of such deposits are seldom revealed; and there is some evidence that these, like the older, traditionally exploited deposits of the USSR

* Metric Tons are referred to throughout this report.

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are complex, polymetallic ore bodies, requiring high-cost operations. There is some indication that the complex ores from which zinc is extracted, along with other metals, particularly lead, are becoming higher in zinc than lead content.

As indicated in Tables 3 and 4, the USSR has been a net exporter of zinc to the Free World in each of the last three years. Moreover, the exports have increased from about 15,000 tons in 1955 to more than 30,000 tons in 1957. Despite the rising production levels of the USSR zinc industry, there is no question but that the Soviet net exports to the Free World have been made possible through heavy importation from the other zinc producers within the Sino-Soviet Bloc. In fact, the USSR has been and probably will continue to be a net importer of zinc.

Although most of the major zinc producers within the Sino-Soviet Bloc confine their trading activities primarily to other Bloc members, Poland's situation is significantly different in that trade between Poland and the Free World nations is also rather heavy. In 1957, for example, some of Poland's zinc exports to the Free World were as follows: Austria, 1,200 tons; Denmark, 600 tons; India, 800 tons; Netherlands, 200 tons; Switzerland, 1,800 tons; UK, 11,000 tons; and West Germany, 5,000 tons.

~~If the trend indicated by the trade data for 1955-57 continues,~~
the Sino-Soviet Bloc
~~There can be little doubt that Free World producers can expect the Sino-~~
will
~~Soviet Bloc to become a more formidable competitor in the international~~

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zinc market in the near future. Although the net exports of the Sino-Soviet Bloc to the Free World represented only an insignificant portion of total world trade of about 1.7 million tons in 1957, selective targeting against any particular nation might well be used by the Soviets to achieve some particular economic or political advantage.